

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 16212 071719Z

70

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /071 W

----- 047922

R 071625Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4063

INFO DIA

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 16212

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: DEMARTINO FURTHER DEFINES THE "SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE"

1. SUMMARY: SOCIALIST (PSI) PARTY SECRETARY DEMARTINO'S REPLIES TO SHARP QUESTIONS PUT HIM BY THE ITALIAN POLITICAL WEEKLY (ESPRESSO, NOVEMBER 9) PROVIDE A REVEALING RESTATEMENT OF SOCIALIST POSITIONS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE PARTY'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN MID-OCTOBER (ROME 15118). IN THE INTERVIEW DEMARTINO MAKES MORE EXPLICIT HIS CONCEPT OF THE "AGREEMENT" HE FORESEES BETWEEN THE PSI AND THE PCI IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT THE "SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE," I.E., THE PASSAGE TO SOCIALISM IN ITALY. DETAILS AND COMMENTS FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

2. THE SOCIALISTS AND THE PCI BETWEEN NOW AND THE 1977 ELECTIONS: DEMARTINO EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT THE PSI'S DEMAND THAT THE PCI NOW BE ASSOCIATED IN SOMEWAY TO THE MAJORITY WAS BASED PRIMARILY ON ELECTORAL CONSIDERATIONS (TO ROB THE PCI OF THE ADVANTAGES OF OPPOSITION). THE AIM IS TO CREATE "... SOMETHING NEW AND DIFFERENT WHICH IMPLIES AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES, BUT CONSERVES THEIR RECIPROCAL AUTONOMY. A NECESSARY CONDITION IS THAT THE PCI HAVE A POSITION ANALOGOUS TO OURS (THE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 16212 071719Z

PSI'S) WITH RESPECT TO THE GOVERNING MAJORITY." THE

PRESENT CRISIS OF THE COUNTRY CANNOT BE OVERCOME WITHOUT COMMITTING ALL THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES OF THE COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY THOSE REPRESENTING THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT. (DEMARTINO DENIED THAT DIFFERENCES NOW ARISING BETWEEN THE PSI AND PCI AT THE LOCAL LEVEL WERE SIGNIFICANT.)

3. THE LONG-TERM SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE AND THE PCI:
DEMARTINO DID NOT CONTEST INTERVIEWER'S FLAT ASSUMPTION THAT THIS LONG-TERM ALTERNATIVE ENVISIONS A MAJORITY OF THE LEFT WHICH DOES NOT EVEN INCLUDE THE DC. IN REPLYING, DEMARTINO STATED THAT THE MAJORITY SHOULD "PREFERABLY" BE LARGER THAN 51 PERCENT, BUT DID NOT IN PRINCIPLE EXCLUDE A SLIM MAJORITY. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT TWO MAJOR CONDITIONS BE FULFILLED: A CHANGE IN THE BALANCE OF FORCES BETWEEN THE PCI AND THE PSI; AND REVISION BY THE PCI OF ITS THEORY OF "UNITY IN DIVERSITY" WHICH WOULD REQUIRE ABANDONMENT OF ITS SOLIDARITY WITH SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN REGIMES. DEMARTINO BELIEVES IN THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PCI CAN PERFORM THIS REVISIONISM UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE DEMOCRATIC LIFE IN WHICH IT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATES IN ITALY.

4. SOCIALIST POLICY HAS AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT STRATEGIC CONCEPT FROM THAT REPRESENTED BY ITS FORMER "UNITY OF ACTION" WITH THE PCI. IT AIMS TO CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE TO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC POWER. WITHIN THIS ALTERNATIVE, THE PSI SEES A DETERMINING ROLE FOR ITSELF PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE HISTORIC VALUES WHICH IT REPRESENTS IN ITALY. CONTRARY TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE, WHICH DEMARTINO STRONGLY REJECTED, THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE IS PRIMARILY AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE PSI AND PCI TO BRING ABOUT A DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION TOWARD SOCIALISM. "ADVANCED CATHOLICS" WILL BE WELCOMED IN THE PSI OR THROUGH LEFTIST SPLINTER GROUPS, BUT DEMARTINO WOULD EXCLUDE THE DC PARTY FROM THE FUTURE PSI-PCI ALLIANCE.

5. THE SOCIALISTS AND THE DC: DEMARTINO SAW NO CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN AGREEMENTS WITH THE DC AND THIS STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVE IN THE SHORT TERM. (THE CONTEXT WAS THE PERIOD BETWEEN NOW AND 1977.) HE REFUSED TO PREDICT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 16212 071719Z

WHETHER THE MORO-ZACCAGNINI LINE IN THE DC WOULD WIN OUT, BUT HAD PRAISE FOR IT. IF IT DOES NOT WIN OUT, THE ALREADY STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PSI AND THE DC WILL WORSEN. DEMARTINO (HOPEFULLY) FORESAW DEFECTIONS FROM THE DC TO THE PSI, AND DISCOUNTED THE POSSIBILITY THAT A NEW LEFTIST CATHOLIC PARTY WOULD BE FORMED.

6. THE SOCIALISTS AND THE MORO-LAMALFA GOVERNMENT: THE

WEAKNESS OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT DERIVES MORE FROM THE WEAKNESS OF THE DC THAN THE SOCIALIST DECLARATION THAT THE CENTER-LEFT IS FINISHED. THE PSI REMAINS OPPOSED TO EARLY ELECTIONS. IT WILL HOWEVER CONSIDER IN AN IMMINENT MEETING OF THE DIRECTORATE WHAT NEW INITIATIVES SHOULD BE TAKEN TO "RESOLVE THE CRISIS." "ALL THIS DOES NOT MEAN", HE ADDED CRYPTICALLY, "THAT THE PSI HAS ALREADY DECIDED TO OPEN A (GOVERNMENT) CRISIS OR TO PRESENT MOTIONS IN PARLIAMENT."

7. COMMENT: THE REFERENCE TO PARLIAMENTARY MOTIONS CONCERNS A SOCIALIST PLOY UNDER GESTATION LATE LAST MONTH TO PRESENT A MEDIUM-TERM ECONOMIC PROGRAM IN PARLIAMENT. THE OBJECT WAS TO ASSOCIATE THE PCI TO THE MAJORITY BY FORCING IT TO VOTE YEST OR ABSTAIN BENEVOLENTLY. THE CRUX WAS THAT THE PCI COULD NOT OPPOSE A PROGRAM WHICH INCORPORATED UNION DEMANDS. THE PLOY WAS APPARENTLY NIPPED IN THE BUD BY THE PCI'S INDICATION OF ITS WILLINGNESS TO ABSTAIN ON THE IMPORTANT BUDGET VOTE. THIS IN TURN PROVOKED SUCH STRONG OPPOSITION FROM THE DC'S CENTER-RIGHT, THAT TALK OF A POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT CRISIS MOUNTED. FOLLOWING A PULLBACK BY THE PCI AND A BERLINGUER-DEMARTINO MEETING, THE SOCIALISTS REPORTEDLY ABANDONED THE PROJECT.

8. NEVERTHELESS, MINORITY PRESSURE WITHIN THE PSI TO FORCE THE ISSUE IN THE NEAR TERM REMAINS STRONG. THESE ARE UNITED IN WISHING TO "FLUSH OUT" THE PCI FROM ITS OPPOSITION POSITION AND ASSOCIATE IT TO THE MAJORITY, BUT NOT IN THEIR ULTERIOR OBJECTIVES. THE MANCINI MINORITY WISHES TO PROVOKE THE FORMATION OF A NEW INTERIM GOVERNMENT THE SOCIALISTS COULD ENTER. OTHERS, NOTABLY AUTONOMIST LEADER CRAXI, WISH TO FORCE EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS. BASICALLY
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 ROME 16212 071719Z

THE BIG TACTICAL PROBLEM THE SOCIALISTS ARE STRUGGLING WITH IS HOW TO GET FROM HERE TO 1977 IN SUPPORT OF AN IMMOBILE GOVERNMENT, WITHOUT LOSING THEIR CREDIBILITY AS CLAIMANT TO THE ROLE OF LEADER OF THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT.CALINGAERT

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY LINE, POLICIES, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL LEADERS, SOCIALISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ROME16212
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750388-0795
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751163/aaaaceku.tel
Line Count: 158
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEMARTINO FURTHER DEFINES THE "SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE"
TAGS: PINT, IT, PSI, (DEMARTINO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006